

News from the FPPC

California Fair Political Practices Commission
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For Immediate Release: September 8, 2006
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FPPC Agenda Includes Mixed State and Federal Campaign Activity, Welcome of New Enforcement Chief

The Fair Political Practices Commission on Tuesday (September 12) will address clarifying the rules for the reporting of mixed state and federal campaign activity by California political party committees. Commissioners will also welcome Bill Williams as the new head of the FPPC's Enforcement Division and consider a variety of other agenda items.

The commission's regular monthly meeting begins at 9:45 a.m. in the FPPC's eighth-floor hearing room at 428 J St. (Fifth and J Streets) in Sacramento.

Disclosure rules governing the campaign activities of California political party committees are well established. But when the committees take actions regulated partly by state law and partly by federal campaign disclosure law, the interplay between federal and state requirements is not always clearly outlined in the respective laws. FPPC staff members are proposing a regulation (18530.3) to clarify and codify reporting rules for California political party committees when the committees engage in mixed state and federal campaign activities. In the same agenda item, staff members will propose another regulation (18534) to require campaign committees to maintain separate bank accounts in certain circumstances when a committee is receiving contributions to be used in campaigns for elective state offices, which are limited by Proposition 34, and receiving contributions for other purposes. (See agenda item #14.)

Also on Tuesday, the commission will welcome Bill Williams as the new chief of the FPPC's Enforcement Division. Williams previously was the division's assistant chief. He brings a broad range of government and private sector experience to his new post, including case litigation, management, and helping to implement new and innovative procedures for handling the Enforcement Division's heavy caseload.

“Bill’s extensive administrative law experience, his knowledge of the Political Reform Act and his previous experience as both assistant and acting chief will be enormously helpful as he takes the helm of the Enforcement Division,” said FPPC Chair Liane Randolph. “He is a bright and dedicated attorney and we are extremely pleased that he has accepted this key staff leadership role.”

Williams has been on the FPPC’s staff since 2001, when he became a commission counsel in the Legal Division. Because of his extensive administrative and civil experience, he was transferred to the Enforcement Division in 2002. In the Enforcement Division, Williams was the primary commission counsel in the landmark litigation with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and the Santa Rosa Indian Community of the Santa Rosa Rancheria. He was also lead counsel in the major commission civil case with the American Civil Rights Coalition. In May of 2005, Williams, 51, was promoted to assistant division chief and has been integrally involved in the implementation of procedures to lessen the FPPC’s case backlog and streamline case processing. In addition, he has done day-to-day supervision of the division’s attorney staff. In August of 2006, he was made acting division chief.

Williams, of Rio Oso, is a 1981 graduate of the McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento. After graduation, he went to work for the Peace Officers' Research Association of California as a staff counsel. In 1987, Williams formed his own firm as a sole proprietor.

Williams succeeds John Appelbaum as head of the division. Appelbaum returned in August to the state Office of Attorney General, where he is a veteran staff member. “We enjoyed working with John and deeply appreciate his contributions to the Enforcement Division — including assembling an excellent staff, instituting regular case reviews and other procedures that ensure more timely processing of cases,” Randolph said.

Other items on Tuesday’s meeting agenda include an informational discussion of the regulation of independent expenditures (agenda item #19). Staff will also propose rule changes to reduce duplicate Statement of Economic Interests reporting by certain members of new agencies (item #16), and to clarify elements of the “public generally” exception to conflict-of-interest prohibitions (item #15). The commission also will review the FPPC’s streamlined enforcement programs (item #18) and consider a variety of enforcement cases (items #3-13).

The agenda and supporting memoranda and materials are posted on the FPPC’s website at www.fppc.ca.gov. Just click on “Agendas” on the left side of the home page and go to “Current Agenda.” The agenda is posted on the website 10 days before the meeting, and letters commenting on agenda items are also posted when received.

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